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THE
CHRISTIAN OBSERVATORY:

A
Religious and Literary Magazine.

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CONTENTS.

	Page
THE LAST BOOK OF THE BIBLE,	541
THE RELIGION OF SENTIMENT,	553
MEETING OF THE MUSIC TEACHERS' INSTITUTE,	556
REPENTANCE IN THE CHURCH,	561
REVIEW :	
The Fall. By S. K. Lothrop,	566
OBSERVATIONS ON MEN, BOOKS, AND THINGS :	
Rev. John Pierce, D. D.,	581
The Last Stride of Infidelity,	582
The Puritan and his Daughter,	582
President Hitchcock's Lectures,	583
Valediction,	584
Ecclesiastical List,	584

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THE LAST BOOK OF THE BIBLE.

THE object of this article is, to suggest the proper light in which Christians should regard the closing book of the Bible, and to aid them in deriving increased satisfaction from its perusal.

We are about to propose no theory for interpreting this book. We have no key with which to open it. In thinking of the vast amount of learning and ingenuity expended in criticisms upon it, surpassing all that has been bestowed on any other single portion of the Bible, and feeling as much at a loss now, with regard to many of its chapters as ever, one might almost say, I have wept much, because no one of all the great and good men, who have commented upon it, has been able, to the general satisfaction of the Church of God, to open the book and loose the seals thereof.

The conclusion at which we have arrived, therefore, with regard to it is, that God, who is his own interpreter, has reserved the dark parts of the book to be explained hereafter by his providence, if it shall be found useful to do so. But in view of the inability of the wisest and best of men, thus far, to agree in explaining some portions of it, we are persuaded that the usefulness of the book does not depend on its being understood so far that we can say, This passage refers to such a king, — this to such an epoch, — this to such a power. On the contrary, it appears to us that the book would lose much of its interest, and a great part of its influence over the imagination, and thus upon the feelings, were we able with certainty to say, This passage means Antiochus Epiphanes. This refers to the Guelphs and Ghibellines. This to the partition of the Roman Empire. It may be, that these pas-

sages do thus refer to the men and things here specified ; but it is beyond a question, that the power of the book is greatly enhanced by the uncertainty as to the way in which its allusions are to be interpreted ; — uncertainty, to which the scores of conflicting commentators are a cloud of witnesses.

It is enough for the plain and humble believer, in reading this book, to know, for example, that, in times to come, certain powers will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them. Who these powers are, is a question which it would not help his devotional feelings if he could determine. That the Lamb will overcome them, is all which is essential to his faith and comfort ; and this assurance of his victories, come when and where they may, is sufficient to excite his worship of Him who is Lord of lords, and King of kings.

So with regard to events which are past. It would not make the Christian believer more devout, to know who are meant by the “ two witnesses.” A great object is answered by that seemingly allegorical representation, in making the reader understand that witnesses for God and his truth have been, and will be, slain ; but that truth crushed to the earth will rise again. Whether, now, as some say, this passage is retrospective, and these witnesses were Moses and Aaron, Elijah and Elisha, or the seventy disciples who went forth “ two and two,” or whether they were the Waldenses and Albigenses, the Lollards in England and the Bohemians, John Huss and Jerome of Prague, who will decide for us ? If it were essential to the usefulness of the prophecy, that men should at some time know definitely who are meant by the two witnesses, we may suppose that history would have made it plain. But the want of definiteness in the passage, and fixedness to one particular event, has made it a source of great comfort to the afflicted people of God in different ages. They who lived during the earlier persecutions, no doubt, thought that they saw the “ two witnesses ” successively in every city where persecution raged ; those later saints, the Huguenots, whose bones lay “ scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,” were sure that they were the two witnesses ; while the Puritans and Protestants of England and Holland, were equally sure that the passage referred to them. While persecutions continue in the earth, the passage will not cease to be used for comfort and consolation, by any who are in bonds for the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

Such a view of the Apocalypse will, of course, seem absurd to those in whose hands it is like a dissected wooden map, every piece of which is cut out with such curvatures and indentations, that it will fit one place only. If the wise and good men who have prayed and toiled over this book, had approached in any measure to an agreement as to the references in all the prophetic parts of it, we might, in modesty, consent to be "shut up unto the faith" of their interpretation. But, as we say that providence interprets prophecy, so there seems to be a providence in the diversity, and, in truth, variance, of views among good men, in attempting to explain some of the mysteries of this book; for the effect is, to make the book extend its influence much further than if any one had solved its enigmas, and men had dismissed it from their minds, like a Sphynx's riddle when its solution is once made public.

These remarks apply with equal force to the discussion which prevails at the present time respecting the book, and in which other questions about its interpretation seem to be absorbed, viz.: What parts of the book have been fulfilled, and which of them refer to things yet future? Learned men disagree as much on this point, as men ever did with regard to the question, Who was Antipas, the faithful martyr? Or, what are the seven lamps, and the seven spirits of God? Serious and important questions, relating to the millennium, are involved in this discussion; but, inasmuch as the secret purposes of God are not our rule of duty, judicious Christians generally will labor for the extension of the gospel, at home and abroad; and leave the question, when and in what manner, the kingdom of Christ will be brought to a completion.

Is it not a great mistake, to believe and teach, that every thing in the Bible must in every way be explained; and that every thing was intended to be deciphered, at some time, in every feature, with unequivocal interpretation? Ezekiel's vision of the wheel, in the view of some, must be translated; they have no rest in their spirits, till they determine the explicit meaning of that sublime and fiery apparition. It never seems to be admitted by them, that some images in the Scriptures were merely for the sake of impression; and that they fulfilled their design, when they struck the mind of the seer with awe; and insured a suitable representation of the vision to others, by rousing and affecting his

mind. Some parts of the Revelation may have had no other purpose than this. Indeed, if, as we generally believe, parts of the book relate to things beyond time, there may have been the purpose in the mysterious appearances which passed before the mind of John, merely to excite the faith and hope of believers in all coming years, by giving them glimpses of future triumphs and of endless blessedness; while there was no design that any man should be able, till the fulfilment of all things in the book, to affix a certain interpretation to those appearances, beyond their general object to impress the mind. In accordance with this indistinctness in things confessedly beyond time, some events belonging to this world may have partaken of the same brilliant indistinctness to the eye of John, lying as they do along the same line of vision.

In our abhorrence of papal mysticism, and in our disgust at the allegorical interpretations of Origen and his imitators, we are in danger of passing to the opposite extreme, of compelling every thing in the Bible to take and bear a descriptive label. When doctrinal truth is evidently the design of the passage, all the implements and agents of the most severe analysis may properly be employed upon it; but when the passage is evidently symbolical, there are some cases in which the attempt to give one definite and exclusive meaning to it is like translating the gorgeous shapes and colors of the clouds at sunset. We will illustrate our meaning; for we would not be understood as attempting to throw an air of mystery over the whole Apocalypse. We only insist, that there are some things in it whose power and interest do not depend on being minutely explained or understood. Who, for example, would be so venturesome as to tell us precisely the appearance of that celestial presence which, John says, was to look upon "like a jasper and a sardine stone?" Mineralogy does well to be silent before such a passage. Theology should cover her face, like the cherubim, instead of exacting a precise and definite meaning from some of the apocalyptic descriptions. The description of the personal appearance of the Son of Man, in the first chapter, is another illustration. We venture to say, no one ever had a definite conception of it from that description, any further than that the appearance was awfully sublime.

Yet, there are multitudes of images and symbols which cannot possibly convey more than one impression. "A Lamb as it had been slain," the throne resting on the four living creatures, each

the head of his species, indicating the power and majesty of the throne, celestial armies led by the Faithful and True, the many crowns upon his head, and other symbols which might be named, suggest to every reader the same thing. But when we come to the opening of the seals, and the emptying of the vials, and to the little book sweet and bitter, and to the woman clothed with the sun, and her man-child, and to the millstone sunk by the angel in the flood, we are at a loss in explaining them, except in a most general way. We find no concurrence of views among commentators, with respect to specific numbers, dates, and persons referred to in some of the symbols. Every intelligent reader, however, will have his own explanation of them, according to the theory which he may have adopted in the interpretation of the book, but he cannot be sure that his neighbor will agree with him in it. To the vast majority of our church members, much of the Apocalypse is in many of its parts mysterious; still they derive from the book, as a whole, as much spiritual profit as from any book of the Bible. Indeed, the mysteries of the book give a preternatural interest and power to the whole. The natural love of that which is superhuman, gratified as it is by the sublime and awful figures, which appear at one time in bold relief, and again in distant and shaded forms, draws children and men, and, no less than others, the aged Christian, towards the book with a strong attraction. As young children read the Pilgrim's Progress with intense interest, while as yet they do not understand many of the allusions in it, so the Christian is impressed with this book of Revelation. There is enough of the marvellous to excite curiosity and wonder, and more than enough to gratify the devotional feelings.

Then, some will say, you favor the maxim, that ignorance is the mother of devotion. If the previous remarks do not sufficiently answer this objection, it may be added, that the ignorance which is the natural consequence of our inferior condition compared with the celestial world, does necessarily lead a pious mind to devotion. We do not worship that which is on a level with us, or beneath us. Our incapacity to comprehend, or to understand, many divine things, is the fruitful mother of devotion, and will be so forever. That day of our calamity will never come, when there will be nothing more in God to excite wonder, or when he will cease to be past finding out. We should all be glad to know the meaning of every seal, and vial, and woe, in the Apocalypse;

not a few learned men have felt sure that they could explain them ; many of us have examined their theories, but we find ourselves often perplexed to know which theory is true. Our conclusion is, that there are some things in the Apocalypse, which it was not the design of the Spirit that men should at present interpret with certainty ; and at the same time, we believe that this obscurity is only partial, and is not unfavorable to the spiritual objects of the book.

The view now advanced, that parts of the Apocalypse were not intended to be at once and explicitly understood, is by no means novel. It is sanctioned by great names. Scaliger said, that Calvin was wise, because he did not write upon the Revelation. Dr. Whitby says : " I have neither sufficient reading, nor judgment, to discern the intendment of the prophecies contained in that book." These men were never suspected of want of due reverence for the Scriptures, or of incompetency. Those distinguished scholars and devotedly pious men, who have written with such learning and ability on the Apocalypse, have made the world their debtors, in two things ; first, for explaining the language, and the meaning of the symbols in the book ; and secondly, for making us feel sure, that unity of belief, as to the meaning of some parts of the Apocalypse, is at present impossible, and thus relieving us from fruitless attempts to understand them.

It may be said, that if this view of the Apocalypse be correct, and if we cannot understand the whole of it, so far it is improperly called Apocalypse, or Revelation. Michaelis dwells upon this objection. But it has been very properly observed, that " the author might call that a revelation which was communicated to him in an extraordinary manner, though he had received it, and was to represent it, in a figurative and emblematic style." Daniel had a revelation, when he said, " I heard, but I understood not." It would lead us too far into the discussion of the nature of prophecy, to consider this objection more fully ; we will only refer to an instance of obscurity in the Saviour's words, at the time when, in the presence of the High Priest, he was asserting himself to be the Son of the Highest, which will illustrate, in part, the kind and degree of obscurity which we feel belongs to the Apocalypse. " Jesus said unto him : Thou hast said, (viz., that which I am, the Christ, the Son of God.) Nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Here

the announcement is made, of the Saviour's second coming; the impression upon the High Priest was great, so that he performed that most unusual act, of rending his clothes, as a sign of horror at the alleged blasphemy. But the High Priest, probably, had no definite impression, and it was not intended that he should have any definite impression, with regard to the Saviour's second coming. So in the Apocalypse, our minds are deeply affected with certain truths and expectations, while no man has ever been able to satisfy us, nor can we satisfy ourselves, with regard to the men, the places, the events, the times, referred to in some of the passages. We do not believe that an accurate, or a certain knowledge of details, was the great intention of the prophecy; the object being, as we think, to fill the mind with expectation, hope, fear, caution, joy; and afterward, when the things should come to pass, with a confirmed confidence in the faithfulness of God. This is the view generally taken of the object of all prophecy.

We now turn to that view of the Revelation which the pious and humble believer should take of this important and interesting portion of the inspired Word of God. As to its inspiration, even Dr. Priestley says, that he thinks it impossible for any intelligent and candid reader not to be impressed with the peculiar dignity and sublimity of its composition, superior to that of any writing whatever; nor does he think that any one can resist the conviction, that, considering the age in which it appeared, it could only have been written by a person divinely inspired.

One of the most interesting things connected with this part of the inspired Word of God, and one which is suited to give it, and we believe does give it, a peculiar interest to the children of God, is, that it is the last book of the Bible.

It is true that it was written last, and therefore it holds the proper place as the closing portion of the inspired volume. But while no argument can be constructed to prove a supernatural design that this book, rather than the Epistles of the same author, should close the sacred canon, they who believe in the plenary inspiration of Scripture, will recognize at least a providential purpose and arrangement in placing such a book at the end of the sacred Word. The Apostle is commanded, at the opening of the book, to write "the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." He receives and records the Saviour's messages to seven Christian Churches. These Churches, in the variety of

their circumstances and characters, gave occasion for the largest variety of reproof, admonition, and encouragement; and thus, as Christian Churches, were designed to be, in future, the sources of influence in the conversion and sanctification of men. Thus those messages to the seven Churches of Asia, became an appropriate and important part of a book which was to be the last communication of the Saviour to the world, previous to his final appearing. In those messages of Christ, believers, and especially Christian Churches, hear what the Spirit would say to them; their constancy is commended, their zeal approved, their heresies are denounced, their backslidings chided, and the utmost variety of illustration is employed in setting forth the future happiness of those who shall be found faithful. On days of fasting and prayer observed by churches, there is no portion of the Bible to which pastors and Christians more naturally turn for spiritual instruction, than to the first chapters of the Apocalypse. We feel irresistibly, that this was so designed. Leviticus, and the Epistle to the Hebrews are not more appropriate to their end, than these chapters were to constitute a part in the last book of the Bible.

After these things, "a door was opened in Heaven." A throne was set there, "and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was, to look upon, like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." The white-robed elders, the mingled lightnings, thunders, and voices, the lamps burning before the throne, the throne supported by four living things, each the head of a race in the animal kingdom, and then the chorus of praise, and the acts of reverent worship by the heavenly hosts, all are intended to heighten and assist our conceptions of Heaven. Yet who will take a single feature of that emblazoned imagery, and venture to give to it a confident interpretation, any further than its meaning obviously strikes the mind? What painter would dare to put that scenery on canvass? Who would not feel offended if he did? The grand effect of the whole is, to fill us with new thoughts of Heaven. It is as though, when this book was written, the weary race of men had come to a place in their earthly pilgrimage, where some far-seeing eye descried the indistinct shapes of the celestial world, not sufficiently defined to gratify curiosity, but such as to excite courage and hope, and to make the children of God, in all future time, look upward with assurance of final victory and reward.

We have never sympathized with that mode of interpreting the Apocalypse, which represents it somewhat as the pot of manna in the ark, whose significancy and interest consisted only in its historical nature, its reference to something past. We believe that every part of the Apocalypse is useful, even at the present day; and was intended to be so, as much as any other part of the Bible. It is not like an aloe which has bloomed, and cannot bloom again, within the life-time of the human race. It is rather like the tree of life, with twelve manner of fruits, and which yields its fruit every month, and the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. For there is not, at the present day, a political commotion, or revolution, but the Church of God may be seen turning the leaves of that book; and though unable to say what chapter and verse refer to the passing event, yet animated by the triumphal marches and songs of the heavenly armies, and the sight of Christ at their head, receiving new assurance that he whose right it is, will reign, and the dominion be given to his saints.

We should be satisfied to place in the hands of the humble and pious reader of this book, the following guide, which we believe will suffice to make him acquainted with the main design of the Revelation.

1. The messages of Christ to the seven Churches of Asia, are to be regarded as his last instructions to Christian Churches in all ages of the world, and should be read by pastors and Churches accordingly. 2. Much of the remaining part of the book is designed to encourage the people of God, with the assurance that error, and superstition, and oppression, and whatever vexes the Church, will be destroyed; and that the Church will be saved from the hand of her enemies, and be exalted to incomparable excellence and glory in the world to come. 3. There is to be a long period on earth, during which religion is universally to prevail. 4. The final object of the book is to set forth future and everlasting happiness and misery, as the portion of men according to their deeds. Language faints and fails in the effort to depict the scenes of heavenly bliss; it is equally awe-struck in its delineations of future woe. No part of the Word of God gives us more affecting views of future retribution, than the closing chapters of the Apocalypse.

If, in addition to this short and simple analysis, it be required that we give a key to the meaning of the book in detail, for exam-

ple, that we point out the meaning of the woman and her man-child, and fix the time of the battle of Armageddon, or of the seventh trumpet, we must plead ignorance. While the whole book is intended to be at some time perfectly understood, we take the ground that the object of the book is not merely to give information, but to make impressions; and those impressions are in some instances, secured better by a degree of obscurity as to the dates, the persons of the drama, and the events referred to in the book.

One thing cannot fail to interest the pious reader, as a providential arrangement, in placing this book at the close of the sacred canon. It is probable that readers generally regard the threatening against those who add to, or take from, "the words which are written in this book," as applicable to the whole volume of Scripture. Though to the mind of some German critic, who looks at the books of the Bible as so many separate productions, this is absurd, the believer in plenary inspiration, and in the providence of God with regard to the canon of Scripture, cannot resist the feeling that the Holy Ghost had a design in placing that caution and threatening at the close of the last book in the Bible, rather than at the close of the Pentateuch, or the Gospels. There is a fair constructive application of those words to the whole volume of Scripture. This remark will be regarded as destitute of critical and literary propriety, by some who reject every thing like double sense in the interpretation of the Scriptures, and who do not feel, as Lord Bacon says, that they have a "germinant meaning." We believe that they have; and while we are as far as any from the fanciful methods of interpretation on the part of the allegorizers, we do believe that the Word of God was intended to apply in every possible circumstance and event of life; and that the words of David in the nineteenth Psalm, are as true of the Bible as of the sun: "There is nothing hid from the heat thereof." We feel at liberty, in reading the last chapter of the Apocalypse, to feel that it was intended to be the peroration of the Word of God; that the last chapter of Revelation was meant to be the last chapter of the Bible.

We commend this wonderful book to the re-perusal of our Christian friends; indeed, to all, of every character and age. Its partial obscurity, and the feeling that in some places it is to them, at present, a sealed book with regard to certain details,

should not deter them from reading it. They will read it, we believe, with more pleasure, if they take it up with the understanding, that they are not required nor expected to solve the vast questions which commentators have raised with regard to it. As we might look from the shore upon a tempest at sea, the surf mountain high, the ships distressed and wrecked, and hear the howl of the blast, and see the heavens, air, and sea commingled in the storm, and yet be ignorant of the name and nation of that ship which we perceive dashing to pieces on the rocks, and of the hour when the storm began, or when it will cease, so would we read parts of the Apocalypse ; and our ignorance of the time, the persons, the precise event, signified in any particular chapter, and what nation or power that is, which is represented as driving headlong to destruction, should not detract from the impression of the might, and the avenging justice of God. We do not ask to know when that angel will descend from Heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. Nor do we care to ask the meaning of the number of the beast, nor whether the Roman letters which stand for 666, make the word *Lateinos*, and indicate the seat of the Beast. We are satisfied with knowing that his rise was noted by the all-seeing eye, and that the number of his months is with God. In times past, some of us have read the Apocalypse with Newton, Faber, and others in our minds, and have tried to test the accuracy of their dates, and theories of explanation. We have grown older, and in the mean time, we hope, in this respect at least, a little wiser. We read the Apocalypse now somewhat as we witness a thunder-storm, and look at a rainbow, without making our interest depend wholly on knowing where the lightning struck, how far distant the cloud is, as indicated by the number of seconds between the flash and the peal, or on being able to determine between what capes or hills the rainbow spans the horizon, or with what radius it could be measured. We would read the Apocalypse more as Christians should, — more as heirs of heaven ; and less as critics, or literary men.

We were much interested not long since, on reading the last chapter, in noticing one thing which had always before escaped our observation. We refer to it as an illustration of the spiritual power and interest of the book, when read without any system in the mind to be verified or disputed. “ In the midst of the street

of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life." In the first place, it appears from these words, that a single isolated tree is not meant, but a species of tree, for the tree was on either side of the river. Secondly, the occurrence of trees in the midst of the streets of Heaven, is the point to which we alluded, and this suggests the most interesting reflections. We are not ignorant that some, commenting on this passage, have laid down the plan of the New Jerusalem with great exactness and angularity. They tell us that the river runs through the midst of the street; and that the two banks of the river are lined, each with a row of trees. They remind us of Amsterdam. We prefer to think, that these trees are not disposed in such merely convenient position; but that they stand in groves, and are in the midst of the street, not necessarily following the course of the river, like old willows. Trees in the streets of Heaven! Then of course there are no burdens there, to be drawn from place to place. Wings there are for wheels. Instead of labor, and the busy throng of anxious men, shade and repose are in the streets of Heaven; but here streets are for toil, for funerals. Some of our friends, our children, repose in that shade; labor, care, sorrow, with them are passed away; and while this dim Apocalypse is the only window through which we see, darkly, the outlines of heavenly beauty and glory, they have not only the full vision of God, but revelations of future and eternal things which no mortal has ever conceived. To them, in their advancing knowledge, are continually addressed those words of the angel to John: "Come up hither." They are carried away to points of higher and still higher vision, till earth and time, with their riches, and honors, and pleasures, and sorrows, are the merest trifles. If we are on the road which they travelled, soon with them we shall stand on their high places.

Some of the closing words of the Revelation make us feel as we do on listening to a bell in a country village, tolling for evening worship, while the people are seen slowly entering the house of prayer, and every stroke is ready to be the last. We love the calm, solemn sound of these words, which are the last written appeal which God will make to men: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth, say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

THE RELIGION OF SENTIMENT.

AN author, speaking of a celebrated Scotsman, says : " The main current of his soul is rapt and religious." In proof of this, the following incident is given. " He was crossing the hills from St. Mary's Loch to Moffat. It was a misty morning ; but, as he ascended, the mist began to break into columns before the radiant finger of the sun. His feelings became too much excited for silence, and he began to speak, and from speaking he began to pray ; and prayed aloud and alone for thirty miles, in the misty morning." Yet, from what is known of this same traveller, it is hard to believe that the prayer thirty miles long arose from any deeper or more holy feelings, than any man of a sensitive and poetic temperament might have, under the influence of the beautiful and the sublime in nature.

An American at Rome, describing the works of a distinguished painter, tells us, that " his studio is open to visitors on Sundays, for an hour in the afternoon, and each of his pictures preaches an eloquent sermon." Now, we are just puritanical enough to inquire, Of what do these pictures preach ? To what part of man's nature are these " eloquent sermons " addressed ?

The feelings manifested in these instances, we take the liberty to call the religion of sentiment ; meaning, by this name, a peculiar class of emotions which arise in the soul, under a culture adapted to produce them. They are not all of one kind, but admit of many varieties, according to the character and degree of cultivation, of those who cherish them ; and according to the nature of the objects, in view of which they arise. These emotions belong, no doubt, to the intellect and the sensibilities ; but, they seem to many, to have moral elements which strictly entitle them to be called religious. It is because they are " falsely so called," that they demand attention. But, how shall we describe the religion of sentiment ? It has no well-defined principles, and it fears specific truths and definite duties in religion. It talks of the worship of God, and the practice of virtue ; but when you press the question, " What man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man ? " it is silent ; or takes refuge in words of such ambiguity, that their meaning cannot be compressed into any intelligible propositions. Upon the most rigid

cross-questioning, the religion of sentiment cannot be brought to "define its position" in the moral world. It can shew no chart of the Christian voyage, no fixed meridians, no polar star. Of course, we shall expect to see this religion manifesting a reckless liberality. Its latitudinarian spirit is quite happily embodied in a stanza of Pope's "Universal Prayer:"

"Father of all, in every age,
In every clime, adored;
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord."

To what an accommodating width this stretches the circle of God's true worshippers! The imagination may picture to the heart its idol; and all worship addressed to it, God will regard as intended for himself! The Greek praying to Jupiter, the Hindoo offering to Vishnu, and the Christian singing the praises of Jehovah, are all worshipping the same being, and it matters not by what name their deity is called.

A religion of such comprehensiveness would be pained to hear Christ say to the Samaritans: "Ye worship ye know not what." It could have no sympathy with that apostolic exclusiveness which, proclaiming salvation only by Jesus Christ, declares, that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Nor does the religion of sentiment find any difficulty in accommodating itself to any form of religious service. It is at home in a Protestant church, if discrimination in doctrine and earnestness of spirit are not there. In a Catholic cathedral, without a discord, it chimes in with the "Ora pro nobis," addressed to the Virgin. In a Jewish synagogue, it is not offended at a well-chanted prayer for the *first* advent of the Messiah. And even in a Mahometan mosque, it breathes a silent Amen, when the true Moslem bows toward Mecca, saying: "There is no God but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet."

A good opinion of human nature, is also a leading characteristic of this religion. Speak of mankind as depraved and lost, "alienated from the life of God," "under the curse of the law," needing not only good examples and a careful education, but the "washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," and the religion of sentiment is shocked. It sighs over such "groans

of a gloomy theology." It is astonished that these "Genevan dogmas" find advocates and believers in an enlightened age.

Such are some of the features of the religion of sentiment. A religion, in some of its elements and varieties, common to every age of the world, and to almost every people; but most powerful to deceive and flatter the heart, where civilization has tamed the fiercer passions of the soul, and a refined education has made delicate its sensibilities. This religion meets the student in the classic poem. The lady finds it pervading the fashionable serials, and the gilded annual intended for a Christmas or New Year's present. It claims a stanza, (generally the last,) in the song that enlivens the evening party; it adds one to the variety of subjects skimmed over by the magazines, which adorn the centre-table. Many English writers know how to give the religion of sentiment attractive charms; but in the German of Schiller, and of Jean Paul, few may hope to withstand its fascination. For, unless they are well read in human nature, and "the things of God," it will seem to them that such beautiful sentiments, so beautifully expressed, must be "of the nature of true holiness."

But it is time to inquire what such a religion can do for man, as he is in real life? What did it do for Athens? It reared the columns of the Parthenon,—it erected many an altar; yet left there the vilest passions of man unchecked, and rendered the gospel preached by Paul, a theme for mockery. It could, indeed, say with Aratus:

"For we are also his offspring;"

but it had no ear for truths pertaining to "Jesus and the resurrection."

And how does it now meet the sinner's necessities? It may come to him with a charming moral philosophy, or a beautiful essay on the virtues that are "lovely and of good report;" but, it cannot turn the wanderer "from the error of his ways;" for, it never meets him with an open Bible and an unveiled cross. It may bend the knee, and teach the lips phrases of piety; but never can it bow the soul, or move the heart to say,—"Father, thy will be done!" It speaks not of "Christ, the wisdom of God, and the power of God." It is a religion that looks prettily in the poet's corner of a newspaper, or in the embellished keepsake. It will help an orator to round a period gracefully, or cap

a climax with effect. It gives finish to a scholar's theme, and kindles into quite a glow, the closing sentences of a letter to a friend. It adds dignity to a message to Congress, and lends a becoming air of seriousness to a proclamation for Thanksgiving. But it is powerless to quicken one who is "dead in trespasses and sins," and cannot cause him to "walk in newness of life." For, it has never contemplated the Eternal One as sovereign; just and holy, as well as good and merciful; whose justice in the punishment of sin, is only a manifestation of his goodness, which can no more be separated from it, than light from the sun. Nor has this religion any true knowledge of a mediating and atoning High Priest, who "offered up himself, the propitiation for our sins." It has never heard of a converting and sanctifying Holy Spirit. A religion wanting in these life-giving elements, though it may be polished and brilliant as ice, like the ice, must also be slippery and cold.

As a development of cultivated natural emotion, this religion may ornament the character, and decorate social life; but let not the miseries of man be mocked, by calling it Christianity. The emotions it demands are no more like holiness of heart,—no more depend on faith,—than those experienced when viewing the Falls of Niagara, or the fleecy clouds of an autumnal evening, as they are swept over the disk of the moon. As a religion, can it even be called beautiful? It may be the religion of beauty; but how different from the beauty of religion! To one who has seen "the glories of the cross," the religion of sentiment, viewed as religion, exhibits only "the beauty that hovers round decay," the beauty of phosphorescent wood, dependent upon darkness for its effect.

MEETING OF THE MUSIC TEACHERS' INSTITUTE.

THIS is the sixteenth annual meeting of the Association of Teachers of Vocal Music, held in Boston. It commenced on Monday, October eighth, and closed on Saturday of the same week. Whoever, without having observed the annual progress of this important Institution, gave attendance at the meetings of this year, must have been delighted and surprised. They gave proof of great progress in musical taste and skill, which must be attributed mainly to this Institute and its able professors.

With us it has always been a question, whether the influences of climate, and an unpoetic style of life, would not prevent a high musical development in, at least, the northern section of the Republic. Our scepticism, however, was much shaken by many things that met our eyes and ears at those meetings. Not that we heard from American lips either the rich, majestic bass of Rossi, or the clear, elastic, uncorporeal breathings of some Italian soprano singers. We surely live too near the cave of old Æolus for that. But the choral singing was equal to any we remember to have heard in England or Italy, if the Pope's choir is excepted. The American voice admits of cultivation to a very high degree. And a soul in New England may get far enough from the magic power of the dollar, to feel and utter genuine music. Adopted foreigners contributed greatly to the excellence of the services; but they were not singular in their excellence, nor did they claim to be "foremost among equals." There is in our native citizens, good taste, and a true musical sentiment, the cultivation of which is peculiarly important to us, as an active and practical people. The love and cultivation of music under right influences, will tend to soften the natural asperities of our national character, and to improve the style of our address and intercourse.

We have had the pleasure of hearing the instructions of the "People's Teacher," in Paris; but have never heard musical instructions to classes, so judicious, clear, and important, as those given at the Institute. We have heard church music in England, France, Germany, and in the land of song itself; but we have never heard church music so appropriately and effectively sung, as in Boston. Our testimony is at least disinterested, whether the judgment it expresses be correct or not.

Of the instrumental performances, perhaps none are competent to speak with authority, but the initiated. Of the vocal performances, however, we claim that, in certain respects, the ear not trained in the schools, may form the most correct judgment. Theologians often condemn a sermon which "the common people heard gladly" and profitably. We were satisfied with the precision, modesty, and appropriateness, with which all the accompaniments were performed. We ask of the organist, that he blow not away the gentlest note of the human voice, nor weigh down that which he should sustain. We ask of the orchestra, that it

be not brassy, nor windy, nor scraping; but sweetly breathe into us the gentler sentiments of music; and when it creates thunder, let not the creaking of the machinery, the mere noise of sound be heard. So they did on the occasion we speak of, and we thank them for it.

From six hundred to a thousand performers were present at the several concerts given. The exercises were of three kinds: Instruction in sacred music and psalmody, with illustrative exercises; glee singing; and concerts.

The lectures and exercises were given by Professors Mason and Webb; and they were invaluable to the teachers and students of music. We frequently wished that every clergyman in the land could have heard the remarks made on psalmody, the selection of tunes, and musical expression. The praises of God are acknowledged to be a very important part of the services of the sanctuary. But the value of those services depends greatly on several things which ministers do not yet sufficiently appreciate. Some of these they would have discovered for themselves, and made their own "inferences and applications," had they been present.

The minister is interested in the choice and reading of the hymn; in the tune selected for singing it; in the manner of its performance; and in his own example as a man, humble, devout, earnest, in the praises of the most high God; and not as one exempt from that sublime service, or called to do sundry more important things, while the people are attending to that. There was much said on the need of discrimination between the various sentiments and objects of the different hymns, which are of supreme importance to men who intend to sing "with the spirit and the understanding."

The glee-singing we did not attend. But we are contented to know, that the Teachers' Institute would admit nothing inconsistent with the sacred character of the chorister's profession and employments.

The concerts were grand, for this Western Hemisphere. To us the climax was Mozart's twelfth mass. What will our Roman Catholic neighbors say to this confession? We make it in the ear of their priesthood; we love Mozart's Mass. And yet our confession must not stop there. Our difficulties with the fine arts are many. They may arise from ignorance or prejudice;

but there they are. How are the fine arts to flourish in the papal style, in a country whose institutions, literature, social life, and individual character, are so far moulded by Puritanism? It is certainly a question that may suggest some important reflections. There are points of collision which awaken our solicitude. Perhaps no better illustration can be given than in this magnificent mass. We then inquire, Is it an act of worship, or an exhibition? If the former, then it seems to us, a mind must be in a very peculiar frame, to repeat fifty times in one hour, "Kyrie, eleison; Lord, have mercy." If any person were to repeat it twenty times in a public prayer, it would sound most strangely; it would be wrong. And why would this be offensive to every ear? Because it would be that "vain repetition" which our Lord has condemned. We can indeed excuse Mozart, and even commend him, for turning this important prayer over so often, in such varied forms, when we regard him as alone in his study, giving utterance to his own penitential feelings, and merely imagining that a hundred voices were giving utterance to his own struggling spirit. But when in reality, a hundred people rise to sing such a prayer, however we may charitably believe that they feel it sufficiently to utter it once or twice, or even many times, yet by all the laws of rhetoric and music, what can justify a constant repetition of the same idea fifty times, without expressing any climax of emotion? Considered as an appeal to the Searcher of hearts, may we not question, Whether it is reverential thus to repeat two words in a public prayer?

If, however, the performance of the mass be considered an exhibition, then we must be allowed to question the propriety of making a theatrical display of penitential feelings. This is very puritanical; and as Puritans we utter it. Says the venerable John Newton: "If it could be reasonably hoped that the performers, and the company assembled to hear the music, (of Handel's *Messiah*, performed in Westminster Abbey,) or the greater part of them, were capable of entering into the spirit of the subject, I will readily allow that the *Messiah*, executed in so masterly a manner, by persons whose hearts, as well as their voices and instruments, were tuned to the grateful emotions of an audience duly affected with a sense of their obligations to his love, might afford one of the highest and noblest gratifications of which we are capable in the present life." But if it be avowed, as we

now are supposing, that the very object of singing the mass, is to afford a musical entertainment, we can never assent to its propriety.

As a work of art, the performance by the Institute was worthy of the highest commendation.

And perhaps we may be allowed to express our orthodox satisfaction with the manner in which the composer has framed that part of the service, where the worshipper announces his belief. It is a splendid musical refutation of all the "liberalism" of our infected district. It utters forth with such bold, manly, Christian firmness, — CREDO! CREDO! Not a shred of the delicate scrupulosity which some refined spirits have experienced in declaring what they know, lest somebody else should know that he knows just the contrary to be true. The bass of the "Credo" rolls forth like the very thunderings of Paul on Mar's hill; like his martyr-sayings: "I know in whom I have believed;" "I am not ashamed of the gospel;" "I glory in the cross."

Sacred music is yet in a transition period. The choir-singing has corrected many of the intolerable abuses and perversions which disgraced the worship of God. But we need to reach another stage, in which the full power of the choir shall be employed, sometimes alone, sometimes with the congregation. And many of the remarks made by Professor Mason on the rules to be observed in selecting congregational tunes, threw a most satisfactory light over this difficult subject. We allude to his observations on the compass and rhythm of the tune. He restricts the range to the octave within the D's; and rejects all complex movement, all syncopation, and all excessive variety in the length of notes, requiring great delicacy of time-keeping to do them justice. This makes the case plain. Congregations can sing in time, tune, and expression, if these points be observed in the selection of the music.

It has often seemed to us very desirable to have assemblies of the people for the purpose of attending to sacred music. Perhaps one or two in a season might be sufficient. The object of the meeting should be, to have the pastor select a variety of hymns; and on each one, as it is announced to be sung, let him first make remarks, leading the attention of the assembly to the subject, commenting on phrases, describing the class of emotions, thoughts, or purposes, each verse may be designed to express.

Let the chorister then make remarks upon the character of the tune to which he sets it, and point out the common faults in singing that tune. As an illustration of our meaning, all the triple time tunes are drawled and dragged by our congregations. Mear is in triple-time ; so is Balerma. But to an ear that appreciates time and rhythm as vital elements of music ; the ordinary utterance of them is extremely painful. So we might speak of the peculiarities of Hebron, and similar tunes. Now, as musical cultivation will advance in the community, we ought to avoid inflicting needless pain on any who attend on the services of the Lord's house. Such meetings, held once or twice in every season, and oftener if desired, would certainly do much to give increased efficiency to our church music.

We would recommend clergymen to make their arrangements to attend the morning meetings of the Institute hereafter. They would find themselves instructed, and aided in an important part of their duties.

REPENTANCE IN THE CHURCH.

"REPENT, and do the first works," is a part of our Lord's address to the angel of the Church of Ephesus. It is a seasonable counsel ; nay, a positive command to many churches, and many Christians, at this time. The repentance of a Christian is, in some respects, different from that of an unbeliever. In other words, the first act of repentance differs, in several of its features, from every subsequent repetition of that act. The first may have more disturbance of the sensibilities, but generally has less clearness of vision, if not less thoroughness of volition. The exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the extent of evil in the heart, are more fully discovered after believing in Christ, than before. The novelty of the subject has ceased, and the despair of unbelief has passed away ; but there is a clearer apprehension of the perverseness of the heart, and a more abasing discovery of its wilful wickedness, of its ingratitude, selfishness, pride, and self-will, its tendency to depart from God, and to make a god of created things.

These subsequent exercises of repentance are of two kinds. Some of them are gentle, gradual, and progressive in depth and strength. Others are sudden and powerful, effecting great revolutions in the character and life. The more sudden and convulsive forms of repentance in Christians usually follow either long declensions, or enormous sins.

Of the gradual kind, specimens may be found in all religious biographies, and in the penitential psalms of Scripture. For an uninspired instance we may refer to the diary of William Wilberforce. He says: "When I look back upon my past life, and review it, comparing especially the numerous, almost innumerable, instances of God's kindness to me, with my unworthy returns, I am overwhelmed, and can with truth adopt the language of the Publican, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' It is the exceeding goodness of God to me, and the almost unequalled advantages I have enjoyed, which so fill me with humiliation and shame." To the same purport are expressions in the writings of Baxter, Martyn, Scott, Payson, and of all others whom we regard as truly spiritual.

Of the same kind is the feeling expressed in the prayers of the Psalmist: "O remember not against us former iniquities;" "Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great;" and in all his humiliating acknowledgments of our common infirmity and sinfulness. Of the more sudden and transforming kind there are many exhibitions in the Scriptures. It may be seen in the case of Joseph's brethren, when their sin was suddenly brought to their view. The more ingenuous feeling was mingled, perhaps, with remorse and fear; yet there was, doubtless, in many of them a genuine repentance. There was sudden repentance, with strong emotion, in the case of David; as expressed in the fifty-first, the thirty-eighth, and other kindred Psalms. So the Church repented in the time of Ezra; so king Josiah repented at a new discovery of his own, and of the people's, sins. So the Corinthian Church was brought, by the reading of one of Paul's first letters, to a sudden and profound repentance, thus energetically described by himself in the second letter to the same church: "Behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!"

Now, it may be more desirable, psychologically considered, that repentance should never take on this vehement form. So, it may be better, physiologically considered, that no arsenic nor opium should ever enter the human body. And yet, it may still remain a fact, that judicious practitioners will continue to employ these lesser evils, for the removal of greater. We may perhaps entertain as much abstract opposition to revivals of religion, as any brother who decries them. And yet we may prefer, when the church is in a wrong spiritual condition, that she emerge from it just as suddenly as the Corinthian church did; just as vehemently, zealously, and indignantly.

We can conceive of no way of escape from the present torpid, unaggressive, formal condition of our churches, but by the door which the Lord set open to the angel of the Ephesian church in similar circumstances. He commanded him to repent, and do the first works. If any member of the church has lost the fervor of his first love, the simplicity of his early faith, the zeal and thankfulness, the humility and charity, the prayerfulness that characterized his first consecration to Christ, he must, in his mind, turn away from his present mental condition; and in his outward life, turn away from all that is the result of this inward declension. The more promptly, earnestly, fervently, and thoroughly he thus repents, the more beneficial will be the consequences. And this is what we mean by a revival of religion, regarded in its human aspects.

Now there can be no question among evangelical Christians on this point; that, however important it may be to prevent declensions in religion, yet that when a Christian has declined, he should be brought to repentance; prompt, profound, emotional, voluntary and practical.

Nor can it be doubted that we, at the present time, greatly and specially need the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit. In what manner we should labor to produce that result; in other words, what are the immediate mental and outward acts which shall be the precursors to that specific action of the Holy Spirit, is a question that may divide good men. That something ought to be done, none but a fatalist or an antinomian can question. As, however, we differ, some sincerely believing that it is expedient and necessary to employ extraordinary means to this end; and others, thinking that we should be contented with a faithful

attendance on ordinary means, let each follow his own convictions. Only let us unite strongly in the desire, that all the friends of Christ should repent, and do the first works. Let us in our secret prayers, spread the present lamentable condition of Zion before the Lord, and like our great High Priest, "with strong crying and tears," plead for the return of the Spirit. Let the preachers of the word, like John the Baptist, lift up their voices and say: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

A penitent Christian is powerful, even if his repentance be sudden; more truly powerful, if permanently penitent, with no declensions; but always powerful in proportion to the degree of his penitence. Repentance is a turning of all the faculties to oppose sin. The understanding comes to perceive how unreasonable, false, and ungodly it is; the heart to feel how unlovely, how detestable it is; the will to relinquish its most cherished forms, and to set itself in deadly antagonism to them. This is power, in a world that is altogether sinful. It is a current of the breath of heaven, going over the face of a stagnant sea, agitating its sluggish waves, and troubling its dead waters. It is a stream of the life that is in God, rushing against the current of worldly affections. And what if the two should create a storm? It would not be unlike the operations of God in nature; as, for instance, the meeting of the winds and waters that rush into such terrible embrace from the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans, at the fatal Cape Horn.

The dread of encountering this storm, is the real, though unsuspected, reason why Christians dread repentance. The first storm is in their own hearts; for when they have sunk into a worldly state, have formed worldly habits, and entangled themselves with various worldly alliances, then to discover the evil of these, and to begin the change that an enlightened conscience demands, is dreadful. Nor does the difficulty cease there; for when the personal change is effected, and the Christian's own house is set in order, then there begins another antagonism. He has discovered the hatefulness, not only of vice, but also of sin; not only in himself, but in all other men. He sees now that worldliness is a sin; no matter what disguise it puts on; no matter how refined in its form. Having discovered its evil in himself, he sees its evil in another, and in all others. He will then in heart, be opposed to it, and shew that opposition in all natural

and prudent ways, which must produce what the seamen call a "cross-sea;" the current of the ocean running in one direction, and the wind raising a current to run in the opposite, or in an angular direction. This is the unquiet state of a revival; and here the conviction of unbelievers begins. Here, too, "a man's foes" become "those of his own household," as our Lord declared they would be. Men out of Christ, and in the world, are obliged to feel the power of this heaven-descended impulse, reaching even to them. And their consciences recognizing its divine origin and authority, prevent their putting it down with contempt. Its power thus lies in its causing a civil war in their breasts; arousing the conscience to oppose the heart, and demand its surrender to the claims of Christ.

The power of penitence is seen, too, in the preaching it produces. The repenting preacher cordially hates sin, while he loves the sinner. He will then, bear with the pressure of a resistless weight, upon the consciences of his hearers. He is not like those men who, in preaching against vice, promote wickedness; who preach against specific sins in such a way as to leave the great generic sin of ungodliness quietly entrenched in the heart; who preach against particular forms of sin, in a way that flatters every sinner who is not addicted to those forms of it. Not being in a penitent frame themselves, they cannot produce penitence in others. They may describe the vices finely, as Blair does; they may thunder against the grosser sins; even against the more popular forms of those sins, which violate the second table of the decalogue; but the great sin of having a heart alienated from God, they do not sincerely abhor, and so cannot preach against it with any power. They cannot earnestly plead with each and every unbelieving and worldly man to repent and turn to God, from a deep conviction that that man is, and ought to be, condemned and destroyed for not loving God. Penitence in the pulpit is powerful.

So is it in the prayer-meeting, and in the secret intercessions of the closet. When a child of God truly repents, then he feels the evil and the peril of the impenitent to be a dreadful reality. Every day, every hour, the immeasurable evil of their sinfulness, and their real, fearful condition are present to his view; and his prayers for them become sincere and importunate. Do not the members of our churches need to repent now?

REVIEW.

THE FALL. By S. K. Lothrop. Printed for the American Unitarian Association. Boston: Wm. Crosby & H. P. Nichols, 111 Washington St. May, 1849. Pp. 17.

THIS is a tract in the series of the American Unitarian Association. It is one of the most remarkable contributions to theological science, which we have ever seen. The author is the minister of the Brattle Street Church, in this city. He has here presented to the world his views on that important and fundamental subject, the apostacy of man; and the American Unitarian Association has endorsed these views, by incorporating them in its official publications.

According to this tract, the whole world of scholars and readers, Calvinistic and Arminian, supralapsarian and sublapsarian, have misunderstood and misinterpreted the account of the first transgression, as given in the second chapter of Genesis. Mr. Lothrop will not undertake to say what is taught in this chapter; but he proposes to shew "what it does not teach." Every thing in the passage, (Gen. ii. 15-17,) relating to the moral character of Adam previous to his disobedience, he says, is contained in these words: "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

Mr. Lothrop thinks that we have all erred, in supposing that Adam was, at the time this prohibition was given, "holy and perfect,—at least, more so than his posterity." We quote his language: "From these words the popular theology gathers the idea, that Adam was now a perfect and holy man, all his desires in harmony with the will and law of God; that he was not exposed to death; and was also exempt from the necessity of labor." P. 4.

Surely, this is the general, and at the present day, we had supposed, till we read this tract, the universal belief. We have always regarded this to be the true state of the case in respect to Adam, with about the same degree of confidence with which we have always supposed that rain comes from the clouds, or that

there were two human beings at first in the garden of Eden. On reading the words above quoted, we could not refrain from asking, If the original holiness and perfection of Adam are to be questioned, what is there which can be considered as settled?

Mr. L.'s argument, however, is very simple. "If we look at the express declarations of the sixteenth verse, we find that all it teaches of the condition of Adam is, that he was ignorant of good and evil. This is necessarily and directly implied in the prohibition which forbade him to eat 'of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.' What is the condition of a being 'ignorant of good and evil?'"

He then proceeds to say, that it is difficult to form any conception of a moral being in so inferior a condition. The inference, he thinks, would be, that Adam in such an inferior state was evidently "less perfect than we are." He did not know good and evil; that is, the difference between them. Of course, some would argue, he must have been far below us in the scale of intelligent and moral existence. But Mr. L. "cannot believe these propositions, nor rest in these conclusions;" and yet he says: "*We cannot so explain the meaning of the words and interpret the passage as not to lead to them.*" In other words, the fair and obvious interpretation of Scripture leads us unavoidably to the conclusion, that Adam was in a very infantile state as to his moral nature, not knowing the difference between good and evil.

We not unfrequently meet with some speculations about Adam's condition before the fall, which represent him as holding about the same place in the scale of intelligent beings which that jelly, the echinus or star-fish, holds among the creatures of the deep. He was, according to some, in his moral state, a soft, flabby, imbecile formation, incompetent to any thing like reasoning or discrimination; a doltish, overgrown man-child. It is thought impossible that God could create a complete and perfect human being, in the full maturity of his powers. But no one doubts that the birds and beasts which were brought to Adam, were created in full maturity; or that the rivers of Eden ran as full, and were as strong, at first as ever; or that God saw that every irrational thing which he had made was good. How absurd to suppose that he did not, or could not, create man complete and perfect, without waiting for experience or time, as in our case, to perfect him. They who believe Adam to have been

our federal head cannot, of course, believe that God would place on probation a being incompetent to such a trial. Even the author of this tract shrinks from his own conclusion with regard to Adam's infantile state of mind, inasmuch as he says, We find the Most High "issuing a command, and enforcing it by a threat of punishment," which implies that he to whom it was addressed, knew the meaning of punishment, and of course, the difference between good and evil. Yet that untasted tree of the knowledge of good and evil sadly puzzles Mr. Lothrop. His wheel seems to be locked by that tree. He can neither pass on, nor go back. How Adam could know good and evil before he had eaten of that "tree of knowledge," is a mystery to him; and yet he feels that Adam must have known good from evil, or God would not have commanded and threatened him. The conclusion at which he evidently arrives, is, that we cannot prove Adam to have been more holy and perfect than we.

In addition, he proceeds to argue, that, while Adam was no better before his disobedience than we now are, he was no worse afterward; but, on the whole, decidedly better. His argument is exceedingly novel. He says: "What was the first act of Adam and Eve after partaking of the forbidden fruit? They sewed together fig-leaves, and made themselves coverings, because they perceived they were naked. So far as this act indicates any moral change in them, it is an evidence of increased modesty, and not of greater corruption and defilement." P. 7.

All, we think, must admit that this is a discovery in theological science. The world has generally supposed, that the matter of the fig-leaves was a sign of lost innocence, a confession of guilt, an expression of an indescribable desire to be screened from the eye of God, with a feeling of guilty shame, which, till that moment, was unknown to our first parents. Mr. Lothrop demurs to this conclusion. The fall, on the contrary, had improved the character of the first human pair. At their apostacy, a sense of propriety dawned upon them; they no longer behaved themselves unseemly; they took an important step towards an improved state of society, grew modest, and of course enjoyed a much higher degree of self-respect.

But Mr. Lothrop has still further proofs, that the apostacy was not, in the commonly received sense of the term, a fall, in its influence on human nature. He says: "There is nothing that

asserts or implies that man's nature became 'wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.' God cursed the serpent, but he did not curse the man or the woman. He simply told the woman, that she should conceive and bring forth children in sorrow, and be subject to her husband. He told the man, that the ground was cursed for his sake, that he should till it in labor, and eat of its fruit in sorrow, and return to it in death; but he says nothing of his nature being accursed or corrupted. He put enmity between the woman and the serpent, and their seed; but he did not put enmity between the woman and her seed and himself. Nothing is said of an utter alienation of the human heart from God, then and there beginning, and to continue in the posterity of Adam and Eve." Pp. 7, 8.

But we have not yet reached the full measure of Mr. Lothrop's belief with regard to the beneficial effects of the apostacy in Eden. He proceeds thus: "In the twenty-second verse of the third chapter, we read, — 'And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.' Here is the express declaration of God as to the consequence of eating of the forbidden tree, and the character of the change it produced. The declaration does not encourage or suggest the idea, that the moral nature of man was changed for the worse, became totally corrupt, defiled, by this act of our first parents. It says expressly, that it became 'like God' in one of his attributes. The change would seem to have been from a lower to a higher degree of intelligence; from an ignorance of good and evil to a knowledge of both. Adam became like unto God, to know good and evil. His nature was enlarged, his knowledge and discernment increased. It is directly implied, also, that, had he gone a step farther in his disobedience, and eaten of the fruit of the tree of life, he would have attained immortality in his present state. The direct language of the passage, then, instead of teaching the corruption and defilement of our nature through Adam's transgression, declares that it became more like God,—that it attained to a moral discernment which it did not possess before. Here, then, arises another inexplicable difficulty. How can an act of disobedience to God raise a being in the scale of intellectual and moral life? And yet, if Adam became like God, to know good and evil, by partaking of the forbidden fruit, how can we escape the conclusion that his disobedience did produce this result?" Pp. 8, 9.

It has occurred to us, on reading these lines, to ask, What objection the author would have made at being a tempter to our first parents? We venture to say, that Adam and Eve had no stronger inducement to disobey God in any reasonings which were presented to them, than may be found in these quotations. Prompted by his benevolent and philanthropic disposition, our friend, Mr. L., may be induced hereafter to leave his place, in search of some planet where the unsophisticated and naked inhabitants have not learned the knowledge of good and evil; and by the happy effects of the apostacy of man in "enlarging his nature," "increasing his knowledge and discernment," and in making him "like God in one of his attributes," persuade them to some act of disobedience. With this tract in his hand, he need not assume the shape of a serpent; that was cowardly in Satan, and unworthy of the truths which he uttered in the ears of Adam and Eve. Satan need not have used subtilty; if Mr. Lothrop be correct, he spoke the words of truth and soberness. Why God should curse him, and the ground, it would be difficult to say, if this tract be true. All which Satan said came literally to pass, only in the form of a much higher good than he, perhaps, anticipated. Should Mr. Lothrop, hereafter, go forth on such a mission as we have intimated, Gabriel will not warn Uzziel to keep watch for him; nor the seraphs Ithuriel and Zephon draw near to surprise and hinder him. They will have learned, if they do not already know, that Milton's *Paradise Lost* was founded in error, and that the apostacy was really the first step which was taken in human progress. If this tract be true, it would seem that hell must be a sort of university to the intelligent creation, and the boldest sinner most "like God in one of his attributes."

The following extracts, will shew still more fully Mr. L's views of Adam's original nature, and the effect of his transgression on himself and his posterity; together with Mr. L's mode of reasoning on the subject. The italics are in the tract.

"This obscure passage in holy writ, does not teach that Adam was perfectly righteous, indisposed to sin, less prone to evil than his posterity. Adam had but *one restriction* placed upon his freedom, but *one command* imposed, which he was especially warned not to disobey. He did disobey that one command, and thereby it is proved that his nature was *not* on a higher stand-point than human nature at the present day." P. 9.

The meaning is, that Adam's susceptibility to temptation and sin in his original state, proves that his nature was not more perfect than ours. By this reasoning, it could be proved, that angels in heaven, before their fall, were not more perfect than man "at the present day." The tract proceeds to shew still farther, that Adam was not our superior in the respect referred to.

"He was forbidden to eat of the tree which communicated the knowledge of good and evil. This directly and necessarily implies that he was previously not endowed with this knowledge. — So far as the passage teaches any thing distinctly of the moral condition of Adam at creation, it teaches that his nature was inferior to human nature at the present day, that it had not the same discernment of right and wrong that we have. Again, it does not teach, or in any way imply, that Adam's nature, or that of his posterity, became corrupted and defiled by his transgression. The only positive declaration in the passage, that bears upon this point directly, asserts that Adam became 'like God,' through eating the fruit of the forbidden tree; and to become like God, or more like God, cannot be to become more corrupted and defiled." Pp. 9, 10.

The common belief with regard to the fall of the race being thus set aside, it will be interesting to know what effect the apostacy of Adam had, in the view of our author, on mankind. He says: "The general impression made upon the mind by the whole account is, that in some way Adam lost position and favor with God by his disobedience. In that loss, we, his posterity, share; we share in some of the consequences, but not in the guilt, of his disobedience; — just as a child born of a parent who has wasted his property, beggared his family, and ruined his constitution by intemperance and licentiousness, shares in the poverty, and suffering, and sickness, that are the consequences, but does not share in the guilt of the licentious drunkard who caused them." P. 10. "An infant sleeping in its mother's arms is not at that moment a sinner before God, because, and solely because, of Adam's transgression." P. 11.

These extracts give a full view of the author's opinions respecting the human apostacy. The tract containing them is, as before stated, one of the regular publications of the American Unitarian Association. It is right to infer, in the absence of any notice to the contrary, that these views are sanctioned by Unitarians.

Our first remark with regard to them will have reference, not so much to the heretical character, as we deem it, of these opinions, as to the strange misinterpretation of certain passages of Scripture in the tract. We remember that, not long since, several articles appeared in the *Christian Examiner*, complaining of the decay of biblical learning among Unitarians. This tract, we believe, was not then written.

The author of the tract supposes that the knowledge of good and evil, that is, moral discernment, knowledge of right and wrong, was a physical effect of eating the forbidden fruit. And says: "All that it, [the passage,] teaches of the condition of Adam is, that he was ignorant of good and evil. This is necessarily and directly implied in the prohibition which forbade him to 'eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.'"

As the fruits or juices of some trees produce inebriation, or change the complexion, or have a tonic or laxative influence, so this writer supposes that the fruit of the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil, had the effect to convey the knowledge of moral distinctions! He makes the same curious mistake with regard to the tree of life; as though the eating of the fruit of that tree would have conferred immortality. The ground of this latter supposition is an erroneous interpretation of the words of the Most High. "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now therefore lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever:—Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden." Mr. L. evidently supposes that Adam had never eaten of the tree of life, and that there was danger of his plucking its fruit by stealth, and thus frustrating the decree of mortality by the influence of that fruit.

But a little consideration shews this to be wholly erroneous. The tree of life was not a prohibited tree. "Of *every* tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." Adam, then, had already eaten of the tree of life. Some of our judicious commentators speak of that tree as a "sacramental tree," the memorial and seal of eternal life on condition of eternal obedience. But the idea that the fruit conferred vital powers, or that it was an antidote to death, we believe is not generally accepted by biblical scholars. Neither is it supposed by them, that the

fruit of the tree of knowledge had any effect on the moral constitution. It was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in this sense ; — that while Adam abstained from plucking the fruit he would experience good, and when he should pluck it, he would experience evil. But the notion that it had any power to make the eater more intelligent ; or that, as animal food invigorates the physical system of a child, so this fruit would produce some physiological or metaphysical alteration in man's nature, has no countenance from the most approved interpreters of Scripture. Mr. Lothrop has been unconsciously biased, we think, by the tempter's remarks to our first parents. His tract evidently follows Satan's exegesis. He strove to make the impression on our mother, that there was something in the effect of the fruit on the human system which was greatly to be desired. This tract falls in with the same opinion. The author has a better opinion of Satan, it is true, than we have, if "the knowledge of good and evil" be synonymous with an advanced state of moral being. But we should be at a loss to explain how the "tempter tempted Eve with his subtilty," as the apostle says, except by the suggestion of this idea. It is generally supposed that his subtle insinuation consisted in the idea, that the fruit of the forbidden tree would advance the moral condition of man, thus perverting the name of the tree, and making that which was intended to be a means of good by abstaining from it, and of evil by eating it, appear to be a source of improvement in the intellectual or moral faculties, or both, by the power of the fruit to raise the eater, "from a lower to a higher degree of intelligence."

Adhering still to this notion, that the knowledge of good and evil, that is, of the difference between them, came by eating the forbidden fruit, the author argues that the effect of the fruit was to make men "more like God in one of his faculties." This, again, was the invention of Satan. There is no other authority for the idea. He made our mother believe, (as this tract teaches,) that to eat that fruit would make her somewhat divine ; and that God knew it, and was practising imposition upon man. "For," says the tempter, "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil ;" that is, having an improved moral discernment, and becoming acquainted with many things extremely desirable to be known.

The author evidently thinks that the words of the Most High, preparatory to the expulsion of man from Paradise, are a solemn and literal acknowledgment of the undesired effect of the fruit on the first pair. Such an interpretation represents God as soliloquizing at an event which he greatly regretted, namely: the advancement of Adam and Eve in their moral discernment; but if, according to Mr. L., Adam took a step higher in the scale of the intelligent creation, we are at a loss to see why the Most High should have deplored it. He does not deplore the sin, but only the effect, namely: that man had "become as one of us," that is, God. Now this, according to Mr. L., was a positive improvement, and he uses it to shew that Adam, before his fall, and before he enjoyed this advancement, was not so high in the scale of being, as we.

The very common and obvious interpretation of this passage is the only one which is generally approved. Judicious critics represent it as an expression of holy indignation, with an admixture of irony and pity, on the part of the Most High. Behold poor man, guilty and wretched; truly this is being like one of us! Sad consequences of being beguiled by Satan, to think that eating that fruit would make him wiser! And now, lest he repeat the same folly, tempted again by Satan, and, thinking that the tree of life, instead of being a covenant seal, is an antidote to death, should rebel against the dread sentence, and vainly seek to live forever by eating of the tree which he has now forfeited, let him be driven out from the garden, to convince him that he is fallen and lost.

Any other interpretation, especially the one which Mr. L. adopts, can easily be shewn to be impossible. For any other interpretation would reject the idea of irony in these words. It would represent the Most High as saying, We did not intend that man should rise to so high a degree of intelligence. We meant to keep him low, by keeping him ignorant. This is a counterplot; and man has stolen a march in moral and intellectual progress. We must forefend ourselves against his further assumption of a higher intelligence. It will be dangerous to our plans and purposes, to let him remain in reach of a tree whose fruit once tasted will be an antidote to dying. How shall we prevail against his vaulting ambition, but by expelling him from among those trees?

Such, we think, is a just paraphrase of the words of the Most High, if Mr. L.'s interpretation be correct; an interpretation which makes the Most High more an object of commiseration than man. Yet the doctrine of this tract is founded, in part, upon this interpretation.

Next in order to our objection to this theory as based upon a false interpretation of Scripture, we remark that the tract is erroneous in the assumption which runs through it, that experience of sin is the necessary means of a "higher intelligence" in moral beings. This doctrine is plainly advanced in the foregoing extracts. It is also a favorite notion with Dr. Bushnell, as appears most fully in his letter to the Publishing Committee of the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society.

We all believe that the experience of sin and redemption will, under the overruling power and grace of God, conduce to the more exalted happiness of man, and illustrate the attributes of God. All who differ on the disputed point, "Whether sin is the necessary means of the greatest good," agree in this belief. But the idea that the practical or experimental knowledge of evil is necessary to a higher degree of intelligence, we have already intimated, and repeat it with due deference, is only a "doctrine of devils." It is contradicted by facts. Woe to Gabriel and his peers, if this be so. There will then be an intellectual inferiority in heaven to the inhabitants of hell. No doubt the fallen angels believe this doctrine. Religion in their view is abjectness. The holy angels seem to them, we presume, as Milton makes Satan taunt them, in the light of bondmen to the Almighty. "Thy words," says Satan to the seraph, "argue thy inexperience!" This comports with the doctrine of the tract before us. Inexperience of sin, it is thought by some, makes a nature soft, effeminate, and pusillanimous; and to all such, it is supposed by wicked angels, their

"Easier business were to serve their Lord,
High up in heaven with songs to hymn his throne,
At practised distances to cringe, not fight."

But to fight with God has something stalworth in it; to suffer punishment with an indomitable will, daring him to do his worst, is true greatness. So the knowledge of all sin opens to the mind worlds of ideas, without which a soul is yet in boyhood, and can

never be said to have attained its majority. The abominable doctrine that reformed rakes make the best husbands, is founded on this theory.

Some such doctrine as this, we have perceived, is in the minds of certain professedly Christian parents. They would not be unwilling to have their sons pass through great experience of sin, provided they could be sure of their repentance and conversion in season to do that greater amount of good to their fellow men, which, they are persuaded, they would do as a consequence of their experience in transgression. But if this be true, it is certainly singular that the author and finisher of our faith, our example, the Redeemer of lost men, was not made perfect for his work by being permitted to fall under Satan's fiery darts in the wilderness; and then, recovered from sin, use his qualifications thus acquired, to rescue his brethren.

The author of this tract probably regards the Saviour as a perfect specimen of human nature. We say *probably*, for charity impels us to say this; and yet we should infer, from his views of the power which the knowledge of evil has to raise us to a higher intelligence, and from its effects as he regards them on Adam, that the man Christ Jesus was, after all, though a very good man, yet inferior to what he would have been had he obeyed Satan in the wilderness, and thus had enjoyed the "knowledge of good and evil," in the sense in which those words are interpreted in this tract. We have for some time doubted, whether the character of Christ does inspire certain men, ministers of Christ in name, with true respect. Theodore Parker evidently has but small reverence for the human character of our Redeemer. He has used expressions with regard to him which make the blood run cold in our veins. Others in the denomination to which he yet belongs, though they must, as a matter of course, express before this community their regard for Christ, yet, if the truth were known, we believe would not assign to Jesus the highest place in moral and intellectual attainments. They themselves, by their "knowledge of good and evil," such as Jesus never had, possess the elements, in their own view, perhaps, of a higher nature, the means of a far greater moral discernment, and sources of future happiness in their deep and rich experience of sin. It seems to them a masterly thing to have been able to sin. The man who should hold his breath, and be able to stay beneath the ponderous ocean long enough to survey those

“Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
All scattered in the bottom of the sea ;”

or the man or angel who could pass that trackless gulf, and know the depths of hell, would have in his new sources of thought, and “higher intelligence,” a noble reward for his peril and suffering. So it is, no doubt, supposed by some, that the experimental knowledge of evil is advantageous to the moral and intellectual nature. Hence, as we have said, some parents are less careful about the virtue of their children ; they give them full sweep in their acquaintances and amusements ; feeling, if their views could be interpreted, that, in accordance with the doctrine of this tract, they will be hereafter, if converted, “more like God in one of his attributes.” How that one attribute of God itself became perfect without an experimental knowledge of evil, we are not informed ; “for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man ;” neither of which, we think, could be said, if the experimental knowledge of evil were the necessary means of a higher state of intelligence.

No, it is not true, that to pass through the baleful experience of vice is the means of greater intellectual and moral excellence. The imagination, the forms of thought and expression, are corrupted or tainted inevitably by experience in sin ; the soul is haunted by remembrances of foul deeds ; the sense of purity is lost ; the renewed sinner always cries : “O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me !” The Bible sets the seal of reprobation on the notion, that experience of sin is the necessary means of a higher state of intelligence. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” “The knowledge of the holy is understanding.” Fool and sinner, are, in the Bible, convertible terms.

The influence of this tract we cannot but regard as extremely pernicious. It first came to our knowledge in consequence of its being pointed out to a friend by a young man, who exulted in its principles as affording a defence to libertinism. It is one of the fruits of Unitarianism, acknowledged by the husbandmen of that vineyard. All which they here teach their fellow men, with regard to the apostacy and its effects on us, is, that Adam by his disobedience, “*in some way lost position and favor with God.*” “Lost position with God !” Position ! What a word for a pro-

fessed minister of Christ to use in speaking of that tremendous event, the human apostacy, which

“ Brought death into our world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden.”

How carefully and curiously the word is chosen. It is a diplomatic word. A minister at a foreign court, who is in some disfavor by reason of a breach of etiquette, has lost position. The word is suited to elegant social life. A lady who has married somewhat beneath her, has lost position in society. Eve erred in coveting that tree. It would have been better, in some respects, had she denied herself. And yet in what way she could ever have reached “ a higher intelligence ” without sinning, this tract cannot inform us. But though she became like God in one of his attributes, she did a venturesome thing ; for she lost position with God by means of it. And yet, if she fell, it was like “ falling up stairs.” On the whole, she and her posterity will be gainers by it ; though it did offend the Almighty in a measure, and she lost something thereby. It compelled the Most High to consult how he could defend himself against the law of progress, — this destiny of man to “ a higher intelligence.” The necessity of curbing man’s prurient spirit placed man in a “ position ” of restraint before God, and induced some loss of former favor. But the effect on the Almighty was nothing more than that he was piqued, and devised the best method to preserve himself from any further disrespect. Adam became a “ Prometheus bound.” Adam’s Jove was very angry, and resented it that he should have stolen a divine prerogative ; but he took means to prevent the recurrence of the trespass.

And is this the fall of man ! Such an apostacy, of course, needs no redemption, and Unitarianism provides none. We, as descendants of Adam, are like “ a child born of a parent who has wasted his property.” P. 10. That child, however, may in time become richer than his father ever was. So we have improved on the character and state of Adam, enjoy a higher intelligence, and are more “ like God in one of his attributes.” What has Christ to do with us ? and “ What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of God ? ” He professes to set us an example. Then let him first disobey God, and raise himself to a level with us ! We now can teach him, rather than he us ; for we have

a "knowledge of good and evil" which he never enjoyed. His name, Redeemer, seems, in view of the principles in this tract, to be unmeaning. "Redeemer!" It implies that we are lost. Nothing is lost but "position" with God, and "favor." We were "compromised," as the French say, in Adam; but as the English have it, we have since "asserted our rank."

Correct views of sin are, of course, fundamental in every scheme for human amelioration. Such being the Unitarian views of sin, as conveyed to us by this authorized exposition, we cannot look for any thing better in the views of regeneration, atonement, and future punishment, held by those who acknowledge this tract as an expression of their views of the human apostacy. What a religion for mankind! Is this "pure Christianity," "an enlightened and liberal faith," "Christianity purged from the old leaven of false views of God and human nature?" No wonder that it has never tried its efficacy on the heathen nations. It has no foreign missionaries, though it professes to republish that pure gospel which its Founder enjoined should be preached to every creature.

The theology of this tract belongs originally neither to heaven nor earth; it is contradicted by the whole Word of God, removes every fundamental principle in the system of revealed truth, and paves the way in every mind that receives it, for pride, contempt of Christ, favorable views of sin, licentiousness, the loss of the soul, and the condemnation of the devil. It is a theology suited to balls, masquerades, and card-parties. In the latter part of the tract, the author has some conservative views with regard to the proneness of our nature to sin; but after all which he has said in the first part of the tract, his readers, we apprehend, will trouble themselves but little with his discriminations.

One of the worst features of the tract is its insinuating way of bringing the Old Testament into contempt. It says: "We cannot rest in these conclusions, and yet we cannot so explain the meaning of the words, and interpret the passage, as not to lead to them." P. 7. That is, The plain meaning of Scripture here, is against reason. This is also Mr. Parker's way of girdling a Scripture history, when he is unwilling to cut it wholly down.

There is one interesting and important bearing of this tract in a local respect. Its author is generally regarded as one of the most serious and conservative of Unitarians. He was prominent

in sustaining some meetings for prayer and conference, held last winter in the Unitarian churches of this city. His remarks and spirit led some to hope, that he and others were approximating to evangelical views. But what a development have we in this tract. Here we see the foundations of the author's religious belief. The fall is a misnomer. The fall was rather an elevation; the apostasy more like an anabasis. It made man "more like God in one of his attributes." Alas! our hopes are dashed. We cannot look for figs on such a tree, nor for grapes from such a bush.

The Christian Inquirer, a New York Unitarian paper, complains that Unitarians have few or no tracts on religious biography, and religious experience, in their series, and proposes to incorporate some from the series of the American Tract Society. The reason of this destitution is obvious. There is no such thing as religious experience among those who hold the views contained in this tract, unless it be the experience of conversion from orthodoxy to Unitarianism. They have no conviction of sin in the evangelical sense, no law-work in their hearts, no sense of entire depravity and ruin, none of Paul's or Bunyan's temptations and conflicts with Satan, no discovery of free grace, no knowledge of justification by faith, no joy of pardoned sin, no love and gratitude to a dying Redeemer, no sympathy with that song of heaven, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood." Progressive sanctification, the sorrows and joys of the Christian life are no part of their spiritual history. The more we know of this system, the more we are filled with horror. Some of our dearest earthly friends are under its power. This city of the Pilgrims is greatly corrupted by it. Downward and still downward is its theology descending, to mere naturalism, denying the most obvious truths of revelation.

In the tract before us, we have the most recent development of Unitarian theology, sanctioned by the great religious Tract Society of the denomination. The fall of man was an improvement in his condition! So R. W. Emerson tells us that man's tendency is ever upward, whether he be found in a brothel, dram shop, or elsewhere. Thus error "finds no end, in wandering mazes lost." We are ashamed of this tract as a specimen of Biblical knowledge and theological reasoning, and we are astonished at its bold and groundless denials of the very plainest and most frequently reiterated truth of revelation.

OBSERVATIONS ON MEN, BOOKS, AND THINGS.

REV. JOHN PIERCE, D. D. — Having long held in high esteem this lately departed worthy, we somewhat eagerly took up for perusal a small, but beautifully printed pamphlet, containing the discourse preached by his colleague at the Doctor's funeral, and a Biographical Sketch. As to the discourse, it is, we regret to say, in every respect, a failure. It is strangely spiritless and unfeeling. Its apathetic dullness is distressing to the reader. How such preaching could dry the mourner's tears, unless by working as an opiate to seal their eyes in slumber, it is hard to imagine. There was nothing in the coffin so lifeless as the twice-dead sermon delivered over it. It is said that Sir Godfrey Kneller, after several ineffectual attempts to execute the portrait of a stupid London Alderman, returned to the astonished cit the fee which had been paid in advance, with the remark: "Sir, you gave me this money to paint your face; but you have got no face to paint!" There is no such excuse for him who fails to delineate the strongly marked character of Dr. Pierce. The features of his mind were as massive, healthy, and genial, as those of his animated and cheerful visage. It was a sad day for his church when he departed, and left it to the sole care of one, in whom, (judging by this funeral discourse, which is all that we know of the gentleman or his performances,) there is so much less of the evangelical element, than was wont to be manifested by the good Doctor himself.

The Biographical Sketch is taken from the columns of the *Christian Inquirer*. It is vastly superior to the Sermon; but it is far from being a compensation for its inanity. We sincerely hope that they with whom Dr. Pierce was ecclesiastically connected, will not consent that this pine-scantling monument shall be the only tribute erected to his memory. He merits from them better treatment than this. The *Christian Examiner* for November contains a discriminating and well-drawn outline of the Brookline patriarch, from the pen of Dr. Putnam; but it is quite too brief and general.

The Orthodox were far from approving Dr. Pierce's "non-committalism" as to the great doctrines of the Christian faith. Yet they ever esteemed him highly for his many excellent traits of mind; and had no wish to prevent him from pursuing his own course, though they would not walk in it themselves. It was his hobby to "ride the fence" between Orthodoxy and Unitarianism; and he succeeded in the awkward attempt as gracefully as any elderly gentleman could, though he had to ride, like the ladies, with both feet on the same side. He kept his face turned to the right, toward the Orthodox, as much as might be; and a pleasant and friendly face it always was to us. But had he been flung from his side-saddle, we fear that he would have fallen in the wrong direction. It was, doubtless, easier for him to tell what he was not, than what he was; but we desire to give him the full benefit of his declaration made with such earnestness in the Massachusetts Convention, a year or two ago: "I am not a Unitarian; I never was a Unitarian; and, by the grace of God, I never will be a Unitarian!" As for the rest, we humbly leave him with that righteous Judge, whose utmost mercy we all shall need alike.

THE LAST STRIDE OF INFIDELITY. — The resurrection of our Lord was the turning point in the establishment of the Christian religion, which waited for this event before it could take sure hold upon the human mind. If the crucified Saviour had not risen from the dead at the time prefixed, his doctrine would have exploded at the outset, and would have been heard of no more. His name would have quite perished, finding no more place in history than thousands of the undistinguished victims of Roman tyranny and judicial butchery. But his fully attested resurrection fixed the faith, and fired the zeal, of the primitive disciples, till his religion has become the chief element in the history of the world. "The Lord is risen indeed," or Christianity is a fable. There is no medium between these two positions. He who denies that God raised up Jesus from the dead, is no better than a "heathen man." How can he expect to be saved by a dead man? and by one whose predictions that he should rise the third day after he was slain, were utterly falsified, proving him either an enthusiast or an impostor?

Yet Mr. Theodore Parker, in a sermon delivered on the last Sabbath in October, argued at length against the resurrection of Christ; and intimated that his appearances to his disciples, after death, were only *subjective*, that is to say, existed only in their imaginations. The utter absurdity of this notion, it were easy to shew. It is enough to say, that the man who embraces and teaches it, and yet pretends to be a minister of Christ, is no better than he whose signal to the foe was "Hail, Master!" There is treason in his kisses.

This new attack on the main evidence of Christianity, as it must have been to the earliest believers especially, will fail as surely as all the other devices against the truth. "The Word of the Lord is tried." Tested by eighteen centuries of human experience, it is proved true by its fruits, and stands demonstrated in a clearer light than ever. We have often admired the following fragment, found in the fourth volume of Coleridge's *Literary Remains*: "The result of my own meditations is, that the evidence of the gospel, taken as a total, is as great for the Christians of the nineteenth century, as for those of the apostolic age. I should not be startled, if I were told it was greater. But it does not follow that this equally holds good of each component part. An evidence of the most cogent clearness, unknown to the primitive Christians, may compensate for the evanescence of some evidence which they enjoyed. Evidences comparatively dim have waxed into noon-day splendor; and the comparative wane of others, once effulgent, is more than indemnified by the SYNOPSIS OF THE WHOLE, which we enjoy, and by the standing miracle of a Christendom commensurate, and almost synonymous, with the civilized world."

THE PURITAN AND HIS DAUGHTER. — We took up this work with some misgivings, but in the hope that it might not be altogether a novel. Attracted by the title, we looked for at least a historical romance. But we found only a common love-tale, spun out and interwoven with what sounds to us like the talk of a witty and garrulous old man. Mr. Paulding evidently respects the Puritans, though

he loves them not. He has done his best to stand impartially between them and the cavaliers; but it is evident that his feelings are altogether with the roystering smokers and imbibers on the first plantations of the "Old Dominion." These jovial souls he describes to the life, because he perfectly knows what manner of spirit they are of. But his Puritans are not human beings. They are, like Frankenstein, the work of a magician who is frightened at his own creation. They are like the iron-man of the Rosicrucians, very terrible in his mechanical justice. They are mere moral machines, with clock-work consciences, wiry affections, and souls wholly made up of the wheels and screws, cogs, cams, and ratchets of an iron dogmatism, all unpolished and unoiled. They have great virtues and merits; but they are the virtues of a rolling-mill, and the merits of a hydraulic press. Mr. Paulding, like multitudes of others, wholly misconceives the Puritan character. He regards them as grim and gloomy, rigid and rancorous, foes to innocent mirth, and strangers to the gentler affections. Whereas they were common mortals, in whom the common affections and sympathies of our nature were elevated, as well as strictly regulated, by the strong restraints of divine grace. They loved their wives and children as much as we love ours; but, possibly, they loved God, and duty, and self-denial more. Strange as it may seem to some, they even took pleasure in fun, such as they deemed compatible with right. Hugh Peters was a great joker; Nathaniel Ward, the author of the "Simple Cobbler," was a noted humorist; and Oliver Cromwell, it is notorious, often descended to the roughest practical jests with the great men of his court. Yet all of them were held in the highest esteem by their co-religionists. Perhaps no better mode of dispelling the absurd prejudices as to the social life of the Puritans, could be devised, than the publishing of a collection of their witty sayings, which often bit as keenly as their swords, and which must have relaxed their features into something like the hearty cheerfulness which, in all ages, has marked the British mind. We hope that no one will ever be tempted to renew Mr. Paulding's experiment of working up romances out of Puritan stuff. No man can succeed in the attempt, who is not in full sympathy with the religious life of the Puritans;—and no such man will ever write a novel.

PRESIDENT HITCHCOCK'S LECTURES ON THE FOUR SEASONS. — We know not how to speak of these four sermons in terms of admiration so strong as we could wish; and yet we dare not speak of them so highly as we might, for fear of provoking the spirit of unbelief. We shall persist in our admiration, let those who will ascribe our enthusiasm as to this small volume to a too fond appreciation of one whom to know, is to esteem and love. We know not where to find, in so small a space, such a delightful blending of Orthodoxy, piety, science, taste, appreciation of nature, fine instinct for analogy, and "curious felicity" of simple and eloquent expression. "The Resurrections of Spring" is a discourse full of exceedingly ingenious and original discussion of the doctrine of the final resurrection; and a defence of it, on novel scientific ground, against the objections of the doubter. "The Triumphal Arch of Summer" is such a spiritualiz-

ing of that beautiful object, God's "bow in the clouds," as is singularly charming to the fancy, and soothing to the spirit. "The Euthanasia of Autumn" must be peculiarly pleasing and appropriate for perusal at the fall of the year. This is the discourse which most exalts the hope of the Christian. "The Coronation of Winter" is the most brilliant of the series, and is quite as magnificent in its way, as the gorgeous spectacle it describes with such truth and feeling. It is a great merit in these discourses, that they are affluent in impressive and appropriate quotations from the Holy Scriptures. The author has evidently been accustomed to study the "book of nature," and the "book of grace" in parallel columns, where each illustrates the other, and the harmony of both bespeaks them to be published by the same beneficent and all-glorious Author. When the President of Amherst College shall preach any more such discourses, may he, as now, have Mount Holyoke for his pulpit, and all New England for his audience !

VALEDICTION. — The editors of this work for the year now closed, assumed the duty at the request of the Publishers, after an informal appointment on the part of many of their brethren. They have fulfilled their office for the designated period, with what skill or success they leave others to say. They have found it a very pleasant and profitable duty, as respects its reaction upon their own minds and hearts ; and would gladly continue their joint labors, if other and prior engagements would permit. But as this is found to be impracticable, it has been arranged by the new Publishers, to whom the work has been transferred, that the care of the editorial department for the ensuing year shall devolve on Rev. Mr. McClure. He is, however, authorized to expect efficient assistance from most, if not all, of the present editors, and from many of the ablest writers and scholars in our ecclesiastical connection.

ORDINATIONS.

- Oct. 17. Professor E. C. Wines, at Vergennes, Vt., as an Evangelist.
 " 18. Mr. Francis G. Pratt, Winthrop Church, South Malden, Ms.
 " " Mr. Charles B. Smith, Levant, Me.

INSTALLATIONS.

- Oct. 10. Rev. Lewis Pennel, New Fairfield, Con.
 " " Rev. Charles Hyde, South Coventry, Con.
 " 17. Rev. J. Wellman, Lowell, Vt.
 " 25. Rev. William C. Foster, Shawmut Church, Boston.

DEATHS OF MINISTERS.

- Oct. 24. Rev. William Riddel, South Deerfield, Ms., æ. 83.
 " 29. Rev. Nathan Rodgers, Hallowell, Me., æ. 28.

P R O S P E C T U S
OF THE
C H R I S T I A N O B S E R V A T O R Y
FOR 1850.....VOL. IV.

THE original Editor of this Work, on resuming his former relation to it as its only responsible conductor, wishes to return his warm thanks to those numerous friends who have heretofore aided the work by their communications, or by their personal influence in its behalf. He would especially render his thanks to those brethren, with whom he was united in carrying it on during the past year. He can now, with propriety, testify to the laboriousness, zeal, and punctuality, with which they fulfilled the duty assigned them; and to the gratifying unanimity which has marked all their proceedings, though every variety of theological sentiment recognized among the Orthodox was represented in their number. The present Editor feels that he has derived the most essential and permanent benefit from his intimate association with them through the labors of that year; and is happy in being permitted to rely on their aid and advice, as future occasion may require. It will be his endeavor, that the work shall continue to exhibit, as it has done, the Orthodoxy of New England. Important as may be the points disputed among us as brethren, they are of far less consequence than the grand doctrines of the Cross on which all are substantially agreed, and the opposing errors which on every side rise up against the common faith. Any attempt to array the peaceful and united churches of Massachusetts, or other States, into rival schools or hostile factions, is to be deprecated with the utmost earnestness.

We do not wish to have any more of controversy on our pages than may be necessary for due interest and instruction in the questions of the day. "Heresy hunting" is no part of our business. The tables, in this respect, are turned, and it is heresy which often hunts us. But when it comes rushing at us with open throat, we shall neither fly nor hide. We shall meet it manfully with all suitable weapons, whether of argument, sarcasm, or Scripture.

There will be no change in the general character of THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVATORY from what it was last year, unless it be in the attempt to make it more popular and domestic. Though arrangements have been made for securing valuable assistance, the Editor solicits still further co-operation, (which will not be wholly unrequited,) of those numerous brethren, both among the ministry and laity, whose ready pens and fervent minds are needed to vary and enrich its successive issues. May the Divine blessing attend these efforts to maintain and spread the truth in Christ!

A. W. McCLURE.

THE SUBSCRIBERS,—believing that such a work as THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVATORY is needed, that it has hitherto been useful, and is destined to an increasing circulation and influence,—cordially recommend it to the continued confidence and patronage of the evangelical community.

N. ADAMS,
JOHN A. ALBRO,
E. N. KIRK,
W. A. STEARNS,
A. C. THOMPSON.

CHRISTIAN OBSERVATORY.

THIS Work will next year be issued from the Office of THE PURITAN RECORDER. The two publications, however, will be as distinct as they ever were, each pursuing independently its own appropriate objects, under separate editorial arrangements.

Communications relating to the editorial department, will be addressed to Rev. A. W. McCLURE; and those belonging to the publishing department to WOODBRIDGE, MOORE & COMPANY, 22 School street, Boston.

PROPOSALS TO MINISTERS AND OTHERS.

We invite the attention of Pastors and others to the following proposals:

1. Any pastor or other person who will send us the names of four new subscribers to THE PURITAN RECORDER or THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVATORY, with the pay (\$2.00 each), shall receive The Puritan Recorder or The Christian Observatory for one year.

2. Any pastor or other person who will send us a less number of names than four, for either or both of the above publications, with the money for the same, shall be credited 50 cents for each name, in payment for the publication which he may select.

3. Any person who will send us more than four names, and pay for the same, may retain 50 cents per name, as his commission.

We hope that these proposals will induce many to make a special effort, who have expressed a wish for these publications, but for want of pecuniary ability have not taken them. We hope also that many ministers, who are now subscribers to THE PURITAN RECORDER, will secure to themselves THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVATORY by introducing it among their people.

WOODBRIDGE, MOORE & CO.